



# amazing THAILAND

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## SURAT THANI

The name literally means 'city of the good people' and is the former seat of the Sivichaya Empire. It is the largest and most important province of the South, located 644 kms. from Bangkok. It occupies an area of 12,891 square kilometres bordering on Chumphon and the Gulf of Thailand to the north, Nakhon Si Thammarat and Krabi to the south, Phangnga and Ranong to the west and the Gulf of Thailand and Nakhon Si Thammarat to the east. Geographic characteristics of Surat Thani are high plateau and mountains covered with valuable woodforest to the west, and low basins in the central and eastern seashore area. There are a tremendous number of islands along the coast and two major rivers: the Tapi River and Phum Duang River. It is administratively divided into 18 Amphoes and 1 king Amphoe i.e., Amphoe Muang, Ban Na San, Ban Ta Khun, Chaiya, Don Sak, Kanchanadit, Khian Sa, Khiri Ratthanikhom, Ko Phangan, Ko Samui, Phanom, Phrasaeng, Phunphin, Tha Chana, Tha Chang, Wiang Sa, Ban Na Doem, Chai Buri and King Amphoe Wiphawadi.

### ATTRACTIONS

**Pak Nam Tapi (ปากน้ำตาปี)** the Tapi River estuary is some 5 kms. from Ban Don municipality. The area is particularly rich in quality seafood restaurants.

**Khao Thaphet wildlife and Nature Education Station (สถานศึกษาธรรมชาติและสัตว์ป่าเขาท่าเพชร)** is some 6 kms. from town along the Surat-Nasan Road, highway no.4009, and covers 1,162 acres. The station houses many caged wild animals. The hilltop some 210 metres above sea level, offers panoramic views of Ban Don municipality, the Tapi River and Ban Don Bay. On Khao Thaphet is also located the stupa named *Phra That Si Surat* (พระธาตุศรีสุราษฎร์) or locally known as Phra That Khao Thaphet which houses Buddha relics donated by the Indian government some 30 years ago.

**Khleng Yan Wildlife Sanctuary (เขตรักษาพันธุ์สัตว์ป่าคลองยัน)** is situated in King Amphoe Wiphawade, 45 kilometres along the Highway 41 with a 26-kilometres left turn to King Amphoe Wiphawade. Further on for about 10 kilometers, then turn right for another 8 kilometers, one will get to the sanctuary. Major attraction here is the beautiful waterfall "Nam Tok Wiphawade" (น้ำตกวิภาวดี) Accommodation is available. Reservation should be made to the chief of Khlong Yan Wildlife Sanctuary at Mu 8, Tambon Takut Tai, King Amphoe Wiphawadi, Surat Thani 84180.

**Phra Boromathat Chaiya (พระบรมธาตุไชยา)** An ancient pagoda, located in Wat Phra Boromathat Chaiya, Amphoe Chaiya, housing Lord Buddha relics. The structure is believed to be constructed during the Sivechaya period over 1,200 years ago.

**Chaiya National Museum (พิพิธภัณฑสถานแห่งชาติไชยา)** is located at Wat Phra Borommathat Chaiya, Tambon Wiang, Amphoe Chaiya. It is a historical and archaeological museum. The first building puts on exhibition stone and bronze sculptures discovered in the ancient city of Chaiya, for example, sculptures of the God Vishnu and Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. The second building exhibits artifacts of protohistoric down to historic periods from Dravati, Sri Vijaya, Lop Buri,



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Sukhothai, to Ayutthaya. Art objects and several other crafts are also displayed here. Chaiya National Museum is open daily between 9.00-16.00 hrs. except for Mondays and Tuesdays. Admission is 10 Baht each.

**Suan Mekkha Phalaram (สวนโมกขพลาราม)** This is otherwise known as Wat Than Nam Lai (Monastery of Flowing Water), a monastic community located in a beautiful and peaceful natural park where Buddhists go for meditation practice. There are several teaching pavillion which many paintings and poems illustrating moral teachings known in Thai as "Entertainment Houses for the Soul"

**Mu Ban Phumriang (หมู่บ้านพุมเรียง)** Some 6 kilometres east of Chaiya, is an arts and crafts centre well known for its gold and silver brocade silk cloth and jute headwear.

**Ratchaprapha or Chleo Lan Dam (เขื่อนรัชชประภา หรือ เขื่อนเชี่ยวหลาน)** It is located on Km. 52-53 Highway no. 401 and turn right for another 12 kms. The secenery around the dam area is very beautiful. Accommodations are available from the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand, Tel (02) 136-3719 or (077) 311-364,311-522

**Khao Sok National Park (อุทยานแห่งชาติเขาสก)** It is located on Km. 109 from Surat township area on Highway No. 401. A verdant forest-covered hill national park, with an area of some 161,000 acres. Many Kinds of rare wildlife are still be found. With an atmosphere of peacefulness and restfulness, one can trek along the trails made to the adventurer. Accommodations in the park can be available through the reservation section, Forestry Department, Tel. (02) 579-4842, 579-0529. Besides, near the area of the park, there are private-run bungalows available for the tourist.

**Monkey Schools (สถานที่ฝึกลิง)** The schools where monkeys are trained to pick coconuts, there are 2 places: One is located in Amphoe Kanchanadit, Some 13 kms.from Surat Thani along Highway No.401 and another one is at Ban Khlong Sai, Amphoe Tha Chang,some 35 kms. along Highway No.41 Visitors are advised to check with local travel agents for full details.

**Oyster Farms (ฟาร์มหอยนางรม)** are found around the estuarine areas of the Kradae and Tha Thong Rivers, in Amphoe Kanchanadit. Oysters Bred there are substantially larger than those found elsewhere. To visit the farms is by hiring boats from Tha Thong guayside for some 30 minutes.

**Nam Tok Wiphawadi or Nam Tok Ban Nai (น้ำตกบันไ)** Though of the same name as the one within Khlong Yan Wildlife Sanctuary , this one is located in Amphoe Don Sak on the roadside of the Highway 401 between Km.60-61 about 38 kilometres from town.

Though a smalo waterfall, it is always crowded on holidays.

**Ko Samui (เกาะสมุย)** It is Surat Thani's major tourist attraction. The island has numerous lovely beaches and bays. It is almost literally an island of coconuts and forested hills, and is fast becoming a resort of international stature. Samui's best beaches line the northern and eastern coasts, the most popular being Chaweng and Lamai where , generally,the most attractive accommodation is found.

Besides beaches, other island attraction include Nam Tok Hin Lat and Nam Tok Na Muang (น้ำตกหินลาดและน้ำตกหน้าเมือง);Hin Ta Hin Yai (หินตา หินยาย) the phallic rock formations at the southern end of lamai Bay; Big Buddha (พระใหญ่) ฟา massive seated Buddha image of Fan Isle; Na thon, (หน้าทอน) the island's major seafront settlement where shops, restaurants,tour agencies and hotels are located; Samui's Butterfly Park (สวนผีเสื้อสมุย) and Samui's Monkey Centre(ศูนย์ลิงสมุย)



**Mu Ko Angthong National Park (อุทยานแห่งชาติหมู่เกาะอ่างทอง)** It comprises some 250 squares kilometres. Major park islands largely towering, verdant rock masses encircled by clear seas, include Mae Ko (เกาะแม่เกาะ) which has a beautiful beach and an emerald saltwater lake called Thale Nai (ทะเลใน) ; Wua Talap (เกาะวัวตาหลับ), site of park headquarters where accommodation is available for visitors wishing to prolong their stays; Sam Sao (เกาะสามเส้า) with an exciting coral reef and huge rock arch, and Phai-Luak (เกาะไผ่ลวก) Prior reservation is needed by calling 579-0529, 579-4842

**Ko Phangan (เกาะพะงัน)** The large island 60 minutes directly north of Ko Samui, has the lovely waterfall; Nam Tok Than Sadet (น้ำตกธารเสด็จ), Nam Tok Phaeng forest Park (วนอุทยานน้ำตกแพ่ง) and an extensive coral reef. Accommodation is available here as well.

**Ko Tao and Ko Nang Yuan (เกาะเต่าและเกาะนางยวน)** These 2 small rocky islands are administratively under Amphoe Ko Phangan and located at the direction northwest of Ko Phangan. Unspoiled and undisturbed lately by tourists, the islands earn its reputations for underwater resources, unique beautiful bays and coves and coral garden under the crystal sea which give the good promising outlook for the sea sport activities. Accommodations in the form of huts and bungalows are provided on these two islands. To reach Ko Tao economically is by boat that leave from Surat Thani and Ko Phangan. Boats are also available for Ko Tao from Tha Yang Pier, Chumphon. And to reach Ko Nang Yuan, boats are available from Ko Tao.

**Ko Tae Nai (เกาะแต่น้อย)** It is a small island not too far to be reached from Ko Phangan, is increasingly popular to the tourists from its natural beauties. High Jungle-covered hill, long stretch golden sand beach, thriving coral reefs surrounded by fish of all sizes and colours, etc. are some of its major attractions. Accommodations in the form of bungalows are also provided on the island. Transportation is available by means of passenger boat or cargo boat which leave from Surat Thani via Samui.

**Tai Rom Yen National Park (อุทยานแห่งชาติไทร่มเย็น)** covers the area of 133,125 rai of Khlong Nam Thao Forest Reserve in Amphoe Ban Na San and Amphoe Wiang Sa. A mountain within the park known as Khao Chong Chang once used to be the base of the Communist Party of Thailand. There are several scenic tourist spots such as Nam Tok Dat Fa (น้ำตกดาดฟ้า) , Nam Tok Musng Thuat (น้ำตกเมืองทวด) in Amphoe Ban Na San and Nam Tok Than Thip (น้ำตกธารทิพย์) in Amphoe Wiang Sa. Visitors wishing to stay overnight here are requested to bring along their own camping accessories. For more detailed, please contact National Parks Division, Royal Forestry Department, Tel. (02) 579-4842, 579-0529

**Rambutan Fair (งานวันเงาะโรงเรียน)** This annual fair is held in August. The first rambutan tree was planted in Surat Thani in 1926, and this fair celebrates the delicious fruit, which now grows widely in the area. Highlights include exhibitions of local products and ornamental plants, floats adorned with rambutan and other fruits, and demonstrations of trained monkeys who harvest coconuts.

**Chakphra & Thot Phapa Festival (งานประเพณีชักพระ-ทอดผ้าป่า)** This festival is held in October every year. Chak Phra means "to pull a sacred Buddha image" an activity occurring on the same day as the Thot Phapa ceremony, a form of merit-making when Buddhists offer saffron robes

to monks and donates money to temples, at the end of the Buddhist Rains Retreat. Thot Phapa occurs at dawn, before Chak Phra , the ceremony when Buddha images on elaborately decorated carriages are pulled by local people inland and waterborne processions. There are also traditional forms of evening entertainment.

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